A BLACK DIAMOND WINTER
SKI HILLS BRACE FOR A PANDEMIC SKI SEASON

STORY BY MARIAH THOMAS
PHOTOS BY SARA DIGGINS

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The Montana Kaimin is a weekly independent student newspaper at the University of Montana. The Kaimin office and the University are located on land originally inhabited by the Salish People. Kaimin is a derivative of a Salish language word, “Qe’ymin,” that is pronounced kay-MEEN and means “book,” “message,” or “paper that brings news.”

Kiosk

Montana Kaimin

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A look at our source demographics

At the beginning of this semester, the Editorial Board published a racial equity action plan moving forward as a newsroom. One of our top goals was to conduct a diversity audit examining the representation and gender breakdowns of sources we use in our stories. The results of this source audit are summarized below.

Our goal was to use this data as a tool to gauge how well we have represented the UM community. While our demographics are similar to those of UM, the past four years of coverage still tends overwhelmingly white. UM’s Native and Asian student population percentages in particular are much higher than the percentage of represented voices in the Kaimin.

Our gender ratios are relatively even, with a slight lean toward male sources. This is a slight inversion to UM’s ratio. Our team read through 93 issues dating back to Autumn 2017 and analyzed who we’ve talked to and who we’ve photographed, and how that compares to UM’s 2015-2017 student enrollment demographics. Here’s what we found:

• The Kaimin has under-represented our campus: BIPOC community. While our demographics are similar to UM’s, the past four years of coverage still trends overwhelmingly white. UM’s Native and Asian student population percentages in particular are much higher than the percentage of represented voices in the Kaimin.

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VACCINE HOPS TO THE U.S.-19 cases of COVID-19 have been reported up to 94.5% effective, according to New York Times reporting. The news is a major step in the fight against the virus. Vaccines are currently being distributed to healthcare workers across Montana, and it is estimated that more than 220,000 doses will be delivered by the end of the year. The Montana Department of Health and Human Services has urged all eligible individuals to get vaccinated.

VIRUS does not stop the holidays. Students at the University of Montana (UM) are preparing to spend Thanksgiving at home due to the pandemic. UM President Seth Bodnar said in a statement, "We are deeply grateful to our students for their sacrifices and the steps they are taking to protect themselves and their peers."

"We are very pleased to see the continued focus on public health measures," said Bodnar. "These actions are critical to ensuring that the community continues to be safe and healthy."

"We are also proud of the efforts that have been made to ensure that our students have access to the support they need during this challenging time," he added. "We will continue to work closely with state and local health officials to ensure that we can provide safe and effective health care for our students."
Briefs: Vaccines, Thanksgiving meals and winter markets

Yorkshire Green Gravy

Officers responded to Lewis and Clark late at night after a concerned student saw a car parked in the student lot. When UMPD arrived, they confirmed the car was in last lot, but the owner of the car was out of the state. The student reported it to UMPD, who then responded to the scene to take a report.
 licenses for individuals and 5,000 for labs. As demand grew, the department purchased a site license from Sonocent, a software for Students (DSS). McHenry said as soon as next fall if more people don’t find it useful, the software would likely return to being offered via individual licenses, primarily for DSS students.

He said his last tabulation revealed 85% of UM students use Sonocent for in-class studies. The software has four panes: images, references, text and audio. The image pane is where images can be uploaded from presentations, PDFs and images to go with typed notes and information about the reference and text panes. The audio panes contain recorded files that have been uploaded to the system or recorded by the program, but it does not provide transcriptions. The reference pane shows citations that can be downloaded and cited in a research paper, and other tools can be used in Sonocent for in-class studies. Emma Kiefer, a first-year graduate student in biology, said she has used Sonocent for the last three years, but she said she spent more time using Sonocent in the first semester due to increased remote learning this semester. Kiefer said it is an excellent tool to help students focus on certain parts of the lecture.

"This is different than just your regular audio recording because you can get a lot more out of it," she said. "After you listen to your lecture, and see where you missed important information, or add to what didn’t stick, you can reread it and understand the first time around," Kiefer said. She said the software would likely return to being offered via individual licenses, primarily for DSS students.

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Note taking software could be soon for many

JACOB OWENS

As an assistive technology coordinator for Disability Support Services (DSS) at the University of Montana, Emma Kiefer, a first-year graduate student in pharmacy, has long been familiar with note-taking software. She’s used Sonocent for the last three years, but has not currently used it due to the heavy workload.

“Sonocent has four panes: images, reference, text and audio. The images pane is where students can upload slides from presentations. PDFs and images go with typed notes and information in the reference and text panes,” said Kiefer.

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“With Sonocent I can go back and I can touch the performer right now. " It was convenient in the way that we could order from Amazon, but the problem came when making costumes for cast members. The crew only built about 5% of the typical costume work this year.

The dance program was able to use the studio for fittings, but it also meant sacrificing many events, Gregoire said.

“It’s kinda hard to fit yourself, “ said Ember Carpoca.


“It’s hard to control sound and light quality in a zoom room. “ The solution to that problem did not come until all productions were over, but Niccum said she thinks it’s going to work.

“I think this software is a really great start towards accessibility in UM, and I wish that UM would move more actively and publicly to the program, “ Kiefer said. Who’s software hold on Zoom with the students. Next, once the students had some idea of what needed to be altered, the controller s wore the costume and they refitted. Finally, they would take those to the stage before being tracked, to make sure they were COVID-19 safe.

“Not talking to students, people can’t get the word out, “ said Timothy McHenry, the associate professor of scenery and costume design.

“It’s been a learning process, Carpoca said, but it’s the only option that seemed safe and doable, during COVID-19. “The team built 27 saw horses, tap squares for socially distanced dancing, a mountain of suitcases to give the performers in-person control for better lighting and prop set-up. “ Looking to the future, Niccum and Carpoca have said what they learned to come up with a solution to the issues they faced while recording and showing their shows.

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The National Ski Areas Association has guidelines, but to varying degrees. These plans to the public. Ski areas near disinfecting surfaces and communicating include requiring masks in both indoor change, and skiers will assume a shared of life this year, winter sports will have to change, and skiers will be prohibited

And that says that skiers will not have as much access to local hills this year due to coronavirus limits. While snowboard does not have current plans to limit the number of people on the ski hill, other ski lodges in the area are making preparations in case of overcrowding. The resort at the ski hill how to keep people safe in the

“I THINK IT’S JUST A GREAT WAY OF SELF-EXPRESSION AND CREATIVITY.”

HENRY DELUCA

For avid skiers like DeLuca, it is important to know the new guidelines, and how to keep outdoor communities as safe as possible, even in the midst of COVID-19. As the ski hill endeavor to keep the spread of the virus, Snowbowl leaders started the winter, its owner, Brad Morris, said, the resort will open without any limit as the number of people allowed in the ski hill.

Snowbowl, a black diamond winter, meaning optimal skiing conditions. Meteorologists had predicted a La Niña winter, meaning optimal powder was an invitation to get out for skiing.

When the pandemic began in March, some of the ski areas like Snowbowl and Lookout Montanakaimin.com

LOOKOUT PASS

Ski Hill

LOOKOUT PASS

Ski Hill

Ciche Pitcher, the president of Discovery Ski Area in Philipsburg, said, “It’s not going to be the same this winter as it was last year.” Discovery has closed its lodge—the biggest change so far, Pitcher said—and expects to lose money as a result. The lodge will only be open to those with private ski buses or rental apartments. As for food, Discovery has implemented an online ordering system for pick-up from the lodge.

Nevertheless, Discovery anticipates a


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With the main hill closed, USI and Snowbowl had to cancel or reschedule different activities. This semester, the group has only held two outdoor, socially-distanced events. But Deluca said the ski club is still planning to meet and ski together as much as possible in the spring.

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A BLACK DIAMOND WINTER
Ski Hills Brace for a Pandemic Ski Season

Henry DeLuca, an avid skier and the president of the University of Montana’s ski and Snowboard Club, felt the itch to get out on the slopes during the fall. Powder Mountain in Logan, Utah, is DeLuca’s ski home, where he often goes for winter breaks. "It’s a change, and skiers will assume a shared responsibility of keeping the community safe and healthy," he said.

For avid skiers like DeLuca, it is important to know new guidelines, and how to keep outdoor communities as safe as possible, even in the midst of COVID-19. With the pandemic raging in Montana, Snowbowl, along with other ski resorts in the state, is taking extra precautions to address the health and safety of skiers. "We have to limit capacity," he said. The indoor spaces, however, including the lodge to promote social distancing, and skiers will be prohibited from congregating. "What reducing that risk might look like is only having people who are already in season-passes," DeLuca said.

The indoor spaces, however, including the lodge to promote social distancing, and skiers will be prohibited from congregating. "What reducing that risk might look like is only having people who are already in season-passes," DeLuca said. Snowbowl is asking customers to wash their hands frequently. Masks will also be required with your friends at the end," DeLuca said.

LOOKOUT PASS SKI RESORT

WINTER 2020-2021

LOOKOUT PASS SKI RESORT

"We want to make sure that we can have a season that is safe and sustainable," Matthew Sayer, the director of marketing at Lookout, said.

This summer, Lookout had the honor of hosting the Hiawatha Bike Trail, a 15-mile course. This experience taught the ski hill how to keep people safe in the outdoors. But in the event that COVID-19 gets worse, "I would rather see the ski hill struggling than to lose it," Sayer said. "We also expect even more people will choose not to buy annual passes this year," he said.

LOOKOUT PASS ONE HOUR AND 45 MINUTE DRIVE WEST
$450 COLLEGE, $575 REGULAR
LOOKOUT PASS VERTICAL FEET: 1,200
LOOKOUT PASS ONE HOUR AND 5 MINUTE DRIVE SOUTH
$450 COLLEGE, $575 REGULAR
LOOKOUT PASS NO COLLEGE PASS, $574 REGULAR
LOOKOUT PASS VERTICAL FEET: 1,600

SNOWBOULDER ONE HOUR AND 35 MINUTE DRIVE NORTH
$653 COLLEGE, $777 REGULAR
SNOWBOULDER VERTICAL FEET: 2,600

LOOKOUT PASS ONE HOUR AND 45 MINUTE DRIVE WEST
$139 COLLEGE, $449 REGULAR
LOOKOUT PASS VERTICAL FEET: 1,150

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a sign posted in Gull Ski Shop on Nov. 11, 2020, reminds shoppers to maintain a distance of six feet from one another, which is considered the safe standard for social distancing.

busy ski season.

Discovery will limit the number of people on the ski hill if COVID-19 gets worse in Montana, but season pass-holders will always be allowed, Pitcher said. While he doesn’t expect any capacity issues on the hill, the parking lot is a limiting factor.

Pitcher’s biggest concern is that Discovery could see larger numbers of people than their parking lot is able to hold. Discovery has spoken with the forest service about these concerns, and plans to turn people away if the hill becomes overcrowded.

“I think that if we manage parking, other things will be in good shape,” Pitcher said.

Lost Trail Ski Area
Lost Trail, a hill in Sula, MT, opens Dec. 3, but could not be reached for comment. It does, however, list a COVID-19 plan on its website. The plan is consistent with National Ski Areas Association recommendations. Lost Trail will require face coverings indoors, in all lines, during ski and snowboard lessons and while loading and unloading chairlifts. It also states, “If you arrive together, ride together,” meaning one household unit per chairlift.

Lost Trail plans to limit entry to its rental shops, and social-distancing guidelines will govern all indoor spaces. Like Lookout, Lost Trail acknowledges that indoors is where the risk of spreading COVID-19 is greatest.

Like Lookout, Lost Trail asks that riders use their cars as a “personal lodge” for activities such as getting ready, consuming food/beverage brought from home and taking breaks.

While local ski areas may worry about their finances this season, Missoula’s Gull Ski and Snowboard Shop is seeing double the sales of last October.

“ I think it’s two things: time and money,” salesman Nathaniel Solberg said.

Solberg, a ski expert, has worked at the shop for four years. He guessed that the increase in sales is due in part to the fact that people are working from home, and kids are only at school for half the week.

“ A lot of the sales we’re seeing right now are families,” Solberg said.

Solberg said Gull has been selling a lot more weekday passes to local hills than usual. He also said he’s seen many people buying two season passes, one each for Lookout and Snowbowl.

“That money they’d usually spend—they can spend half that on a season pass,” he said.

Solberg has been surprised by how much backcountry gear the shop has been selling. Gull is almost out of boots for women, and manufacturers are out of stock. He added that a new backcountry binding, which connects a ski boot to a ski, has been selling out quickly, despite its price tag of $600.

While these sales are good for business, Solberg worries that inexperienced skiers may be going off trail. He expects that search and rescue teams will have their hands full this year. Skiers new to backcountry, he said, should take an “avalanche one” course to learn basic safety measures.

DeLuca echoed Solberg’s concerns. He encouraged students who are considering this option to go with friends, make sure they know what they are doing and invest in the proper gear.

Hayden Blackford, a UM junior whose dad was a backcountry ski guide, said he noticed a lot more people out in the backcountry when local ski hills closed last spring, but wasn’t worried.

“Generally, I don’t think people will buy the gear and make that investment without knowing their stuff first,” Blackford said. “That’d be like going from zero to 100.”

Last Saturday, Lookout opened for the first time this season. DeLuca was thrilled, despite the changes COVID-19 will require. “What these limitations pose to us is an opportunity,” DeLuca said. “Being outdoors and getting activity will help boost your immune system, and it’s just a fun activity that people can enjoy,” he added.

Ski areas provide the solace of the outdoors that so many have sought during the pandemic.

“ As a ski industry as a whole, while things have been difficult, skiing can be kind of a reprieve,” Pitcher, Discovery’s president, said. “We’re excited we can be a resource for communities going through this time.”
Discovery will limit the number of people on the ski hill if COVID-19 gets worse in Montana, but season pass-holders will always be allowed, Pitcher said. While he doesn’t expect any capacity issues on the hill, the parking lot is a limiting factor.

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While local ski areas may worry about their finances this season, Missoula’s Gull Ski and Snowboard Shop is seeing double the sales of last October.

“This has been really good for business,” said Nathaniel Solberg, a ski expert, who has worked at the shop for four years. He guessed that the increase in sales is due in part to the fact that people are working from home and only at school for half the week.

“Most of the sales we’re seeing right now are families,” Solberg said.

Solberg said Gull has been selling a lot more weekday passes to local hills than usual. He also said he’s seen more people buying two season passes, one each for Lookout and Snowbowl.

“I think the whole world is going from zero to 100,” Solberg said. “That money they’d usually spend—they can spend half that on a season pass.”

Solberg has been surprised by how much backcountry gear the shop has been selling. Gull is almost out of boots for women, and manufacturers are out of stock. He added that a new backcountry binding that connects a ski boot to a ski has been selling out quickly, despite its price tag of $600.

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Hayy ski season!

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A skier at Marshall Mountain. 

Henry Deluca tries to pick up speed on the make-shift rail at Marshall Mountain. Deluca and a few members of the club managed to get in some early season turns and tricks after snow blanketed the nearby Marshall Mountain in over two feet of snow on Nov. 11.

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At Marshall Mountain, a skier at Marshall Mountain.

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A skier at Marshall Mountain.
Opinion

Shopping small is a lot easier than you think.

MEGHAN JENKS
meghan@MontanaKaimin.com

What a stroll down 2020 has been. Most of the skill that we’re missing as a human society is what it takes to walk down the street, and I’d say that about one thing or another. Imaginative. Shopping from your family, holiday season is here! Don’t wait until December 24th to start reaching out to your holiday gift list. But before we can get too comfortable with it’s about love. It’s a welcome relief, especially for the gut-punch of a song that follows. Any moment of lightness, even when it’s

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The song “wilted” is one of the most emotional and vulnerable songs on the album. It’s a stripped-down, acoustic number that highlights Paris Jackson’s vocal ability. The song is about love and the feeling of being torn apart by it. When I first heard the song, I felt like it was my own story, and it made me teary-eyed.

Paris Jackson joins the ranks of indie sad girl.

MEGHAN JENKS
meghan@MontanaKaimin.com

Sometimes, an album knocks you off your feet. And today, that album was “Wilted” by Paris Jackson. Jackson’s latest album, “Wilted,” is a collection of songs that are both raw and vulnerable. The album is a reflection of Jackson’s life and experiences, and it’s a testament to her talent as a singer-songwriter. From the opening notes of the first track, “Lover,” Jackson’s voice is immediately captivating.

Paris Jackson brings together a unique blend of styles and sounds on “Wilted.” It’s a beautiful album that showcases Jackson’s versatility as a musician and songwriter.

Paris Jackson is one of the most promising young talents in the music industry. She has a unique voice and a powerful message that she shares through her music. And with “Wilted,” she shows that she is more than just a pretty face. She is a talented musician who is dedicated to her craft.

Paris Jackson’s music speaks to me on a deep level. It’s relatable and it’s real. She sings about love and heartbreak, and it’s like she’s singing directly to me. I’m so grateful to have discovered her music and to be able to connect with her through her music.

Thankfully, Talbert keeps the focus of the film on Jackson, not the cutesy kids or the cliche musical numbers. But even with that occasional strumming, nothing feels like a soundtrack obligation. No tune feels like a bop or a bopper. No tune feels like sound design. Instead, each track is a standalone piece. Jackson’s voice is a melodic dimmer switch on the next track, disappearing as guitars strum her along.

But Jackson sounds like a mix of Phoebe Bridgers and the late Michael Jackson. Jackson has released two solo albums so far, and both have received critical acclaim. Her latest album, “Wilted,” is no exception. It’s a collection of songs that are both raw and vulnerable. The album is a reflection of Jackson’s life and experiences, and it’s a testament to her talent as a singer-songwriter.

Jackson sings as guitars strum her along. The song “wilted” is one of the most emotional and vulnerable songs on the album. It’s a stripped-down, acoustic number that highlights Jackson’s vocal ability. The song is about love and the feeling of being torn apart by it. When I first heard the song, I felt like it was my own story, and it made me teary-eyed.

The downside is that Talbert leaves the looks of the film in the hands of the creators individually. Jackson’s voice is a mix of Phoebe Bridgers and the late Michael Jackson. Jackson has released two solo albums so far, and both have received critical acclaim. Her latest album, “Wilted,” is no exception. It’s a collection of songs that are both raw and vulnerable. The album is a reflection of Jackson’s life and experiences, and it’s a testament to her talent as a singer-songwriter.
Opinion

Shopping small is a lot easier than you think

MEGHAN JONAS

meghan.jonas@umontana.edu

November 18, 2020

Our cold hard cash is going straight to Bezos with employees about Nick Cave, Harry Styles and Co. or a new tackle box from Grizzly and fires, refusing to drown or be burnt. By the fifth song, it seems obvious that the

It's not enough to say we support things just because

And maybe I'm a sap, but knowing I can give

And you know whose advertisements I see

But before we can get too comfortable with

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The song "eyelids" feels like listening to

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It's more
Local biologists plan sting on campus bears

During winter session, he believes that so far is not comfortable with the idea. relocation process, but the administration traps to be put on campus to expedite the process, said. According to Jonkle, this is to remind people who "bear proof" the campus by locking trash bins, such as bear-human trash and gardens. The big thing is removal of attractors. The bears, no matter how far you home," Jonkle said. One black bear has already been darted and captured in the Rattlesnake area and has since been relocated. Black bears usually begin hibernating in November, according to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

UM volleyball team wins at voting

UM volleyball team wins at voting University of Montana head volleyball coach Allison Lawrence notes for a portrait before coaching volleyball. The UM volleyball team is set to play its first game of the season on Jan. 24 against Idaho State. Lawrence said the team set a goal of getting 100% voter registration and that she hopes to not let the energy fade from the movement for more inclusivity at UM. For Lawrence, who is building a young team, the biggest goal is to help her players to be comfortable with having these types of conversations. "We want to make sure that the girls know that these important conversations are not off limits, and that we are creating a safe space to have those sometimes uncomfortable conversations," Lawrence said. "I think it’s important to keep having these conversations and know that they have a bigger impact on society," Nestegard said. After being a part of these team conversations, Nestegard and Ashley both voted in their first election. Nestegard in her home state of Washington and Ashley in Montana. "I got nervous after just my last two classes. I just got goose bumps because I could not feel how much it mattered," Ashley said. She was surprised by how easy it was to register and vote. "I also emphasized how important social justice was to her personally," Ashley said. "I just want it to be clear to people that diversity and inclusion are not political changes," Ashley said. "Hope-}
Local biologists plan sting on campus bears

UM volleyball team wins at voting

UMIQUE THOMAS
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Last month, the UM athletic department’s new Diversity and Inclusion Committee set a goal of getting 100% voter participation within the athletic department. SARAH PERUS (UMANA KHAN)

She did not specify which issues were a focus.

I think it’s important to keep having these conversations and know that they have a bigger spark and can spread,” Nestegard said.

After being a part of these team conversations, Nestegard and Ashley both voted in their first election. Nestegard in her home state of Washington and Ashley in Montana. She got nervous just putting my ballot in the mail,” Nestegard said. “Then, I got goosebumps because I could feel how much it mattered.”

Ashley said she was surprised by how easy it was to register and vote. She also emphasized how important social justice was to her personally.

“A new voter turnout law was passed,” Ashley said. “I just want it to be clear to people that this is a non-political issue. I just want it to be clear to people that this is a non-political issue.”

Ashley said that the results of Montana’s election matter and her and the coaching staff is part of it. She did not specify which issues were a focus.

“I think it’s important to keep having these conversations and know that they have a bigger spark and can spread,” Nestegard said.

After being a part of these team conversations, Nestegard and Ashley both voted in their first election. Nestegard in her home state of Washington and Ashley in Montana. She got nervous just putting my ballot in the mail,” Nestegard said. “Then, I got goosebumps because I could feel how much it mattered.”

Ashley said she was surprised by how easy it was to register and vote. She also emphasized how important social justice was to her personally.

“A new voter turnout law was passed,” Ashley said. “I just want it to be clear to people that this is a non-political issue. I just want it to be clear to people that this is a non-political issue.”

Ashley said that the results of Montana’s election matter and her and the coaching staff is part of it. She did not specify which issues were a focus.
The story behind Monte’s TikTok success

On a sunny September afternoon, UM’s beloved mascot Monte rocked back and forth on a swing under the Madison Street bridge. Once he got enough momentum, he let go and backflipped into the Clark Fork.

Members of the UM marketing team, including Darren Mason, the assistant director of marketing, stood on the banks the river, filming this stunt for social media.

“We definitely had a couple of people ready just in case anything went wrong,” Mason said.

Monte’s plunge into the water paid off. To date, some 188,000 people have viewed the video on TikTok, an app with over 850 million users.

“See I went to MSU but (the) Griz have a cooler mascot for sure,” one user commented.

Monte has over 16,000 followers on his TikTok, which is @montebear. His videos are all among the most viewed videos of the #gogriz hashtag, which had 4.5 million views, on the app.

Mason said that the swing video also drew attention to an earlier one of Monte frolicking around and hugging fans at a football game. That video, captioned “stay strong Griz nation,” now has over 18,000 likes.

Another video, in which Monte does a front flip over a moving car, has over 31,000 views.

Mason is Monte’s helping hand for all of these videos. If he’s not filming, he’s either holding a prop or making sure Monte doesn’t get hurt or drown in the Clark Fork.

“I give all the credit to Monte, honestly,” Mason said. “If I can be a little part of helping out and just making sure we can execute at a higher level, I’m happy to do that.”

Mason is originally from Nebraska, where he attended Nebraska-Kearney University. He played receiver for Nebraska-Kearney, who compete in the NCAA’s Division II for football.

“I joke about it, but I like to say that I participated in college, I didn’t play,” he said.

Mason graduated with a degree in sports administration and then interned in Clemson University’s sports-marketing department. When Clemson won a football championship in 2016, Mason was given an honorary ring.

He then worked in marketing at Ohio State University. While at Ohio State and Clemson, Mason got into TikTok, which was then a new app used primarily to make dancing and singing videos.

As the app grew in popularity, Mason noticed that Ohio State’s mascot, Brutus, had started a TikTok account. Brutus’s account gained over 225,000 followers and 2.7 million likes within a year and a half.

Mason started working at UM in 2019 and put his TikTok knowledge to use. Monte created his first video in the fall of 2019, and though the early TikToks didn’t gain a lot of traction, they eventually found an unintended audience: hate-watching Montana State fans.

“GO CATS GO!!!!” an MSU fan commented on Monte’s first post. Later comments included “Ftg” and “Bro do u got like only boomers going to your games.”

Around Halloween, Monte “duetted”—or responded by video to—a TikTok featuring Montana State’s mascot, Champ the Bobcat. That video showed Champ frolicking in the snow to Mariah Carey’s iconic Christmas tune, “All I Want For Christmas is You.” Monte duetted with a video of himself carving a pumpkin in the snow.

“It’s still spooky season. Should we tell him?” Monte’s caption read.

That video got over 600 comments, as UM and Montana State fans disputed each other’s mascots and football teams. Monte currently has around 10,000 more followers than Champ on TikTok.

“If there’s Cat (Montana State) fans that have an opinion about it, obviously they’re going to, so we’re going to ignore the hate and all that stuff,” said Mason. “We do enjoy the relationship that the rivalry brings between the two mascots.”

Mason helps Monte with more than just TikToks, such as his skits during UM sporting events. Mason also oversees marketing for Lady Griz Basketball, volleyball and softball, and leads the Grizzly Marketing Academy at UM, which gives students hands-on sports-marketing experience.

Monte’s TikToks, though, remain a specialty. Recently, Monte has appeared in a few of the UM dance team’s TikToks, including one where he joins them in a Halloween-themed dance. The UM dance team, @grizardance on TikTok, has over 8,800 followers.

“Getting more engagement is definitely a goal,” Mason said. “We’re always brainstorming and always looking to see what the next kind of this we can do is. Monte is super talented when it comes to tumbling and all of that.”